

Utah Department of Health - Office of Epidemiology
Listserver update - December 12, 2003

Influenza – for the week ending December 13

Epidemiology

- Reports from sentinel providers indicate that 11.8% of patient visits are due to influenza-like illness. This is significantly higher than the expected value of 3%.
- Utah sentinel schools reported 6.55 % absenteeism. This is higher than the expected value of 5.8%.
- In the US, mortality has not exceeded expected levels. This is a marker for the severity of the epidemic.
- A total of 3,068 laboratory-identified cases have been reported in 21 counties. This number represents patients who went to their physician and were tested for influenza. It does not represent the true burden of disease in the community.

Vaccine and antiviral availability and prioritization

- The Utah Department of Health is urging private providers with remaining influenza vaccines to follow vaccine priorities and offer vaccine to those at highest risk of complications from influenza.
- Due to decreased vaccine supply, it is reasonable to assume that there will be an increased demand for antiviral medications. This demand is likely to place a stress on the supply. It may be prudent to prioritize antiviral use for individuals at high risk of complications.

Priority groups for vaccines and antivirals

- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Healthy children between 6 and 23 months of age
- Persons of any age with chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, HIV, etc.
- Pregnant women in their second or third trimester

If supplies are sufficient, also consider vaccinating/treating:

- People in close contact with high-risk individuals

Healthy people ages 5-49 years are encouraged to be vaccinated with FluMist (more readily available nasal vaccine)

Prevention

- If you are sick, stay home; don't go to work, school, church, social gatherings
- Offer masks to people with fever and cough in healthcare waiting rooms
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer

Reporting

All providers are reminded that unusual occurrences or clusters of disease are reportable in Utah. Please contact your local health department or 1-888-EPI-UTAH (1-888-374-8824).